

Master of Troop 87 of Picayune from 1966 to 1978. Roy has also served as a Deacon at his church, the First Baptist Church in Picayune.

Roy and his wife, Zann, reside in Pearl River County, MS. They have two children, Andy and Mauri, and two grandchildren, Conner and Drew.

I know my colleagues will join me in appreciation of Roy Estess for his extraordinary career of service to the nation and his community and in wishing him and his family the very best in all of their plans for the future. I am proud to call Roy Estess my friend. God bless you, Roy.

21ST CENTURY MEDICARE ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, our health care system has increased the lifespan and quality of life of our citizens. Our population is aging; people with chronic conditions are living longer. The number of Medicare beneficiaries is increasing and will continue to increase as baby boomers retire.

As I have listened to the debate over the last two weeks, I think we can all agree on one thing, the seniors in this Nation deserve the best possible health care, of which prescription drug coverage is a vital component. All of us want to provide Medicare beneficiaries with prescription drug coverage this year. Unfortunately we do not agree on how this coverage should be provided.

I support the Tripartisan bill for several simple reasons. The Tripartisan bill operates on the fundamental principles of efficiency, quality, and choice. It balances all of the issues and provides a permanent solution—all of which result in cost savings and affordability. Balance is a key point here.

We do not offer a plan that cannot be sustained, resulting in bigger problems down the road. We do not offer a plan that ends abruptly. We do not offer a plan offering everything to everyone, knowing full well that it cannot work, as the Graham-Kennedy bill does. We provide Medicare beneficiaries with four key elements: First; Choice. Giving seniors the right to choose a plan and the right to choose a particular medication is the greatest benefit we can offer Medicare beneficiaries. Under the Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill, seniors can only get a government run prescription drug plan. The Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill forces seniors and their physicians into government run formularies. This is not what we want for our seniors and their doctors; Second; Quality. I do not believe that the Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill has any incentive to improve quality—over and over, we have seen how government run programs have failed our health care system. Our Tripartisan bill makes a concerted effort to improve and modernize Medicare, by offering seniors choice not only in prescription drug coverage but for overall medical coverage as well; Third; Efficiency and Cost containment. The Tripartisan bill fosters competition, based on quality and cost. The Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill does not. The Graham-Miller-Ken-

nedy bill cannot deliver drugs efficiently by making the government the sole regulator of Medicare drug coverage. The Tripartisan bill guarantees that at least two plans will compete in each region, giving seniors the right and choice to pick the plans that best suit their needs; and Fourth; Balance. The Tripartisan bill balances the needs of seniors with benefits. We improve coverage for the sickest, poorest seniors by helping needy seniors meet their health care costs through generous subsidies. We use an assets test to determine who needs assistance. What is so wrong with this? All we are doing is applying asset testing criteria for prescription drug coverage. I do want to make a correction to my statement from 7/22/02, The Family Opportunity Act does not have an assets test as I indicated. Rather it has an income and disability test.

In conclusion, I believe the model of the Tripartisan bill is the only workable, long lasting, and fair plan for our seniors and taxpayers. The Tripartisan bill model is the only way to achieve a long-term solution to provide prescription drug coverage to Medicare beneficiaries and, at the same time, give seniors, their families, and doctors choice. It is not a quick fix to get immediate support for something that is not going to last, like the Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill. I am hopeful that more of my colleagues will recognize this, and help us reach an acceptable agreement.

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM CONVERSION ACT

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, today I am pleased to join my colleagues in the Senate in cosponsoring S. 1022, the Federal Employees Health Insurance Premium Conversion Act. This legislation will enable Federal and military retirees to take advantage of premium conversion, which would allow individual retirees to pay their health insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. In 2000, this tax benefit was extended to current Federal employees under a Presidential directive, and it is a benefit available to many private sector employees, and State and local government employees. It only makes sense to bring equity to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

Furthermore, this legislation will allow uniformed services retiree beneficiaries, their family members and survivors to pay the TRICARE Prime enrollment fees and TRICARE Standard supplemental insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars.

I am happy to join my colleagues by supporting this critical legislation and to show my continued support of these Federal civilian and military retirees for their dedicated service.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes

legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of last year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred July 24, 1994 in New York, NY. Two gay men were assaulted by four men who made anti-gay remarks. The assailants, John Gorman and Kevin Shout, both 22, Michael Higgins, 21, and James Shout 27, were charged with assault and aggravated harassment in connection with the incident.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE IN EGYPT

• Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the news from Egypt this morning is both disappointing and disheartening. Egyptian democracy activist and academic Saad Eddin Ibrahim was sentenced to 7 years in jail following a retrial for charges, according to the BBC, "of tarnishing the country's image abroad and other offenses."

Many believe that the case against Mr. Ibrahim, who is a dual Egyptian-American citizen, is politically motivated and a not-so-veiled effort to stifle political debate in that country. Unfortunately, today's verdict only underscores that the rule of law and democratic institutions continue to be weak and non-functioning in Egypt.

It is my hope and expectation that Secretary Powell will clearly, publicly and forcefully register the concerns of the United States with Mr. Ibrahim's case to senior Egyptian leaders. I would offer that it is not Mr. Ibrahim but the Egyptian government—and its weak judiciary, irresponsible and anti-Semitic media, and questionable ties with North Korean missile technicians—that consistently tarnishes the country's image abroad.

To put it simply, the United States must expect more from its ally in the Middle East.●

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I proudly rise today to celebrate a truly remarkable milestone in the American automobile industry. Today, Toyota Motor North America will produce its 10 millionth North American-built vehicle. This notable achievement will take place at the Toyota production facility located in Georgetown KY.